

ARCC - A - TECT

“PLAYING A PART IN BUILDING BETTER SCHOOL DISTRICTS”

Arrowhead Regional Computing Consortium

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January/February/March 2009

ARCC Governance Board Members: Chair: Kim Josephson, Cloquet; Clerk/Treasurer: Scott Wirtanen, Hibbing.
Directors: Duane Buytaert, Cloquet; Rick Herman, Wrenshall; Brad Johnson, Hermantown; Sue Kaslow, Hill City;
John Klarich, Mt Iron-Buhl; Shawn Northey, Mesabi East; Lyn Rajala, Grand Rapids; Tim Riordan, Virginia; Lenore Skoglund, Barnum

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Kris Schmidt, Office Manager x100

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Jeff Yeager x110
Cathy Erickson x113
Cindy Olson x101
Kevin Lindquist x123
Kris Schmidt x100

PAYROLL/STAR

Nikki Logan x103
Carol Knight x104
Kevin Lindquist x123

STUDENT/MARSS

Kerry Chaffey x109
Teri Henderson x107
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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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Next Board Meetings: January 22 & March 19, 2009
Hermantown Admin Bldg, 4307 Ugstad Rd; Hermantown
10:00 a.m.

YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO ATTEND

Board Activity ~

ARCC Governance Board elections took place in December. I would like to welcome Lenore Skoglund (Barnum), Duane Buytaert (Cloquet) and Tim Riordan (Virginia) as the new school board representatives on the ARCC Board. I would also like to welcome Shawn Northey (Mesabi East) and Rick Herman (Wrenshall) as the new superintendent representatives on the ARCC Board. Taking a position on the ARCC Board means extra work for these folks and their willingness to serve the member districts of ARCC is greatly appreciated.

In addition the newly elected members mentioned above, I would like to welcome Lyn Rajala and Scott Wirtanen back for another term. Lyn and Scott will continue as "At Large" representatives on the Board.

Although I am excited to begin working with the new ARCC Board, I will also miss working with three members who are leaving the Board. I sincerely appreciate the past service of Vickie Jerry (Deer River), Bob Silverness (Proctor) and Herb Hilinski (Cromwell) and wish them the very best.

~ Marv Roberts

E - R A T E - Cindy Olson

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Support of E-Rates

Lately there has been quite a bit of concern expressed by regional technology coordinators about MDE's decision to NOT replace Mary Mehsikomer. Mary has supported all of us in the e-rate program for the last 10 years. While I do my best to help you file your e-rate forms, meet e-rate deadlines and work through appeals with you, there are things that the feds used to send to Mary that are now falling through the cracks.

While statewide coordinators are working to make a case to support this position at MDE, is very unlikely that it would be funded with the current economic condition of the state.

My concern is that one of our member districts lost \$25,000 in e-rate funding because a "last chance" e-mail sent to that district ended up in their SPAM box and the carbon copy that was sent to MDE was not read.

While the loss of this position will be difficult, the most pressing concern is that "last chance" e-mails will continue to be unread and more districts will lose funding. Two contacts have been made with the Universal Service Administrative Company/Schools and Library Division (USAC/SLC) and they have been unable to give us any resolution to this problem.

Mid-December while working on Form 471, Yvette Maijala (from Cloquet) asked if a possible solution to this problem would be to add me as your second contact in the "Holiday – Vacation - Summer" line of form 471. I don't know if that will work, but it is something I had not thought of, so for now, we will try that and see how it works. (Thanks Yvette!)

Fiscal Year 2009 Progress

Three of the 38 districts that ARCC supports in the e-rate process have still not received funding commitment decision letters. I know that those three districts are feeling a little anxious. Here are some reasons why I hope you won't worry too much:

- I look at the SLD web site weekly and review the status of your applications and to date they are still in a status that is considered "in process".
- According to the E-Rate Central web site, SLD has been experiencing some computer problems that are affecting their ability to get funding commitments out in a timely manner.
- If you are denied funding, we can always try to appeal the decision and with the Bishop Perry Act, appeals have a better chance of being successful.

Fiscal Year 2009 – What Should You Be Doing?

If you received funding, make sure you complete form 486. Then, if your service provider does not discount your bills on an on-going basis, file your BEAR forms quarterly. This helps with cash flow and could potentially mean you only lose a quarter of funding if everything goes wrong on that last quarter's submission.



Fiscal Year 2010

This is the time of year we all work on filing our form 471's for the next fiscal year. For those districts who have made appointments to come into ARCC to complete the forms, don't forget to bring copies of your invoices, contracts, pin number and your budget projection for fiscal year 2010.

The drop dead "deadline" for this form is February 12, 2009. Unfortunately due to other work assignments, I have to impose a softer ARCC deadline of January 9, 2009. So if you have not made an appointment to complete form 471, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can get that form done and out of the way!!

Have a great holiday season!

FINANCE - Cathy Erickson, Cindy Olson, Jeff Yeager



Mid-Year Finance Reminders ~ Cathy Erickson & Cindy Olson

As we hit the midway point of the fiscal year, Districts find themselves reviewing their current year budgets as well as starting preparations for the FY10 budget. The Revenue Simulations, prepared by Cindy Olson, are available for both FY09 updates and for preliminary FY10 projections. The revenue input sheets are found on the ARCC web site and can be submitted to Cindy by email or fax.

Please be aware that FY10 is based on current law and may not be an accurate estimate of final revenue projections. With the impending state-level budget shortfalls it is very difficult to predict what aids schools may be receiving next year. ARCC will be following the legislature closely and will keep you informed of any action that may affect school district finances.

Districts should also take time to review their student projections and update both Resident and Adjusted ADM's on EDRS. The MDE will use those updated projections to revise aid payments as well as provide district information to the Legislature.

Profiles data collection will start in January and ARCC will offer two Profiles Sessions in mid-February. Your feedback from the past few years have allowed us to add and adjust the information provided, but we are always open to any financial categories that you might find helpful. Please contact Cathy Erickson at cerickson@arcc.org if you are interested in specific UFARS or student data comparisons that we are not currently providing.

If your District certified a Final Pay09 levy that was different than your original Proposed levy, please send the signed summary page plus all subsequent pages to Cathy Erickson. If your final levy is the same as your levy that was run on November 11, 2008, you do not need to mail us a copy of the summary page. We appreciate your assistance.

IRS Mileage Rate Change ~ Jeff Yeager

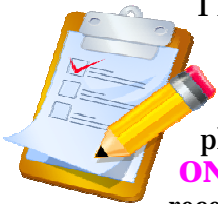
The standard IRS mileage rate is dropping to 55 cents per mile from the current 58.5 cents for business miles driven. This change is effective January 1, 2009.



Reporting Federal Funds ~ Jeff Yeager

Remember to update your accounts for the Federal changes noted in School Business Bulletin No. 37. Any month until early June 2009 is a good time to process an account code conversion before the FY2010 budget is in the system. Contact Jeff if you have questions.

Missing in Action ~ Kris Schmidt



I have completed a review of all district 1099 vendor listings. In doing so, if I discovered addresses that had been entered with punctuation or lower case letters, I corrected them, removing all punctuation and changing to all caps when required. There were also some vendor(s) with no TIN/SS numbers. I notified those districts missing them. If you were one of those districts, please make the correction(s) as part of your preparation to run your 1099's. This review was **ONLY** to check for proper addressing and missing TINS/SS numbers on those that were flagged to receive a 1099. You still need to be sure that **ALL** people who should be getting a 1099 are flagged and that there are not duplicate vendors for them. When you have completed your review, my next request would be that you all have a wonderful New Year! Each one seems to be going by faster than the previous and time slips by often unnoticed. Enjoy each day and those around you! Happy New Year!

PAYROLL - Nikki Logan

TimeOff Conversions

The TimeOff module has been tested and is ready to be released. Conversions will begin shortly after the first of the year. If you want to be one of the first to use the TimeOff module, give me a call and I'll add you to the top of the list.



Calendar Year 2009 Limits & Rates

- Maximum wage limit for OASDI portion of Social Security increased to \$106,800. Maximum withholding for an employee is \$6621.60 (\$106,800 x .062).
- TSA (403b) and Deferred Compensation (457) limits increased to \$16,500 if under 50 and \$22,000 if 50 or over.
- Mileage reimbursement rate effective January 1, 2009 is 55 cents per mile.

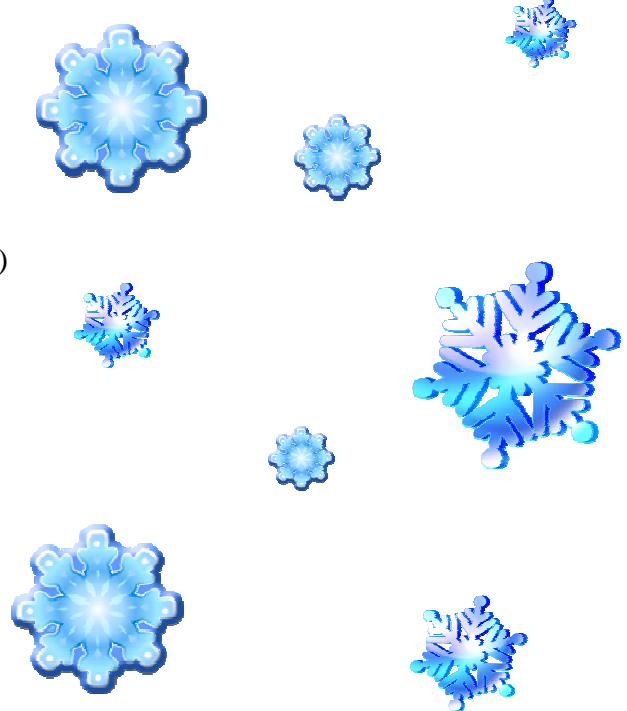
STUDENT - Kerry Chaffey, Teri Henderson, Dale Nielsen

Scheduling for the 2009-2010 School Year ... Planning Ahead! ~ Teri Henderson

Face it. It won't be long before that time of the school year rolls around and you are going to start planning for schedules for 2009-2010. If your district is thinking of having schedule training for next school year, make your reservations soon! Our calendars are starting to fill in!

In order to have a successful schedule training there is some preliminary things that you need to have done. Here is a checklist of what needs to happen **prior** to the training.

- Calendar set up for 2009-2010
 - Roll calendars
 - Schedule Structures
 - Terms
 - Periods
- Enrollment roll over (**do not** end enrollments for 2008-2009)
- Course preparation
 - Attach departments to courses (Course tab)
 - Check terms / schedules / periods (Course tab)
 - Requestable Type – Elective / Required (Course tab)
 - Active (Course tab)
 - Priority (Course tab)
 - Scheduling rules, if any (Scheduling tab)
- Teacher department assignment
- Student request entry
 - Create student logins for current calendar
 - Test student login
 - Use Request Wizard to batch enter requests
 - Have your students register for courses for 2009-2010



Call or email to request a training date for your scheduling team! Contact either Kerry at ext. 109 or kchaffey@arcc.org ... or ... Teri at ext. 107 or thenderson@arcc.org

Campus User Group Upcoming Meetings ~ Teri Henderson

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Information has been sent via email

This meeting will cover rolling calendars and students for the 2009-2010 school year to get ready for student registration and scheduling.



Wednesday, April 29, 2009

Watch your email for more information

We will go over yearend items for 2008-2009 and getting ready for the 2009-2010 school year.

Infinite Campus Interchange ~ Kerry Chaffey

Infinite Campus offers a statewide meeting for users to attend sessions for continuing education from Campus. The Interchange also allows you to network with other districts outside our region. Campus will offer different levels of sessions for beginners, intermediate users and the advanced users.



This year the Interchange will be held in the Brainerd, MN area at Breezy Point on April 22nd and 23rd. The price for the 2 day session is \$275 (early bird) and one day \$225 (early bird) plus lodging and travel expenses.

New this yearCampus is offering a discount of \$50.00 per registration if we have more than 10 attendees from our Region attend the Interchange.

ARCC will send more details on the process and registration information as it become available. If you have not attended in the past, think about attending this year.

Infinite Campus National Records Exchange – Jim Livesay



The Campus National Records Exchange (NRE) is a standardized records transfer utility that will work between two **Infinite Campus** districts regardless of physical location. When a (Campus) district activates this functionality and “joins” the **Infinite Campus** national community of users, districts can request detailed student data from the original district and reduce manual data entry.

Benefits

- Improves the richness of data available to the new school
- Reduces the amount of time spent enrolling a student
- Informs districts of student end status to improve AYP
- Reduces the risk of a paper-based transfer
- Infinite Campus only ROUTES the data – data is NOT STORED

In addition to ISD 318 Grand Rapids and ISD 317 Deer River, *two more* Region II districts have signed up for NRE, Carlton ISD 93 and Greenway ISD 316.

Any two **Infinite Campus** districts within the U.S. can participate once they have subscribed to the NRE service. If you would like more information on this feature, please contact **ARCC** at campus_student@arcc.org.

Assessments Analysis and Curriculum Planning - Dale Nielsen

Before I get started on this discussion I'd like to thank everyone I've been working with this fall. You've all been GREAT - I've thoroughly enjoyed working with you all! We're all learning together and there are some very cool things happening, not the least of which is making some rather complex data understandable and therefore useable. I'd also like to welcome new district partners in assessment analysis, Barnum, Deer River, Hill City, Greenway, Hibbing, Nashwauk-Keewatin, McGregor and Mountain Iron-Buhl.

There's a new Excel workbook available to you! This request came from several districts who asked for Strand Level Analysis. Figure 1, below contains an example of a Math Strand Chart. It can be used to observe trends within strands over multiple years, by grade levels. This is an Excel Pivot Chart, so among the conveniences of being able to manipulate the chart to see different grade levels, years, etc., you can also drill down to observe highly specific record detail pertaining to the assessment strand(s) being observed. I'm told that this is especially useful to Special Education staff that want to know where to concentrate efforts to help their students. It's also useful in helping to identify curriculum strengths and weaknesses.

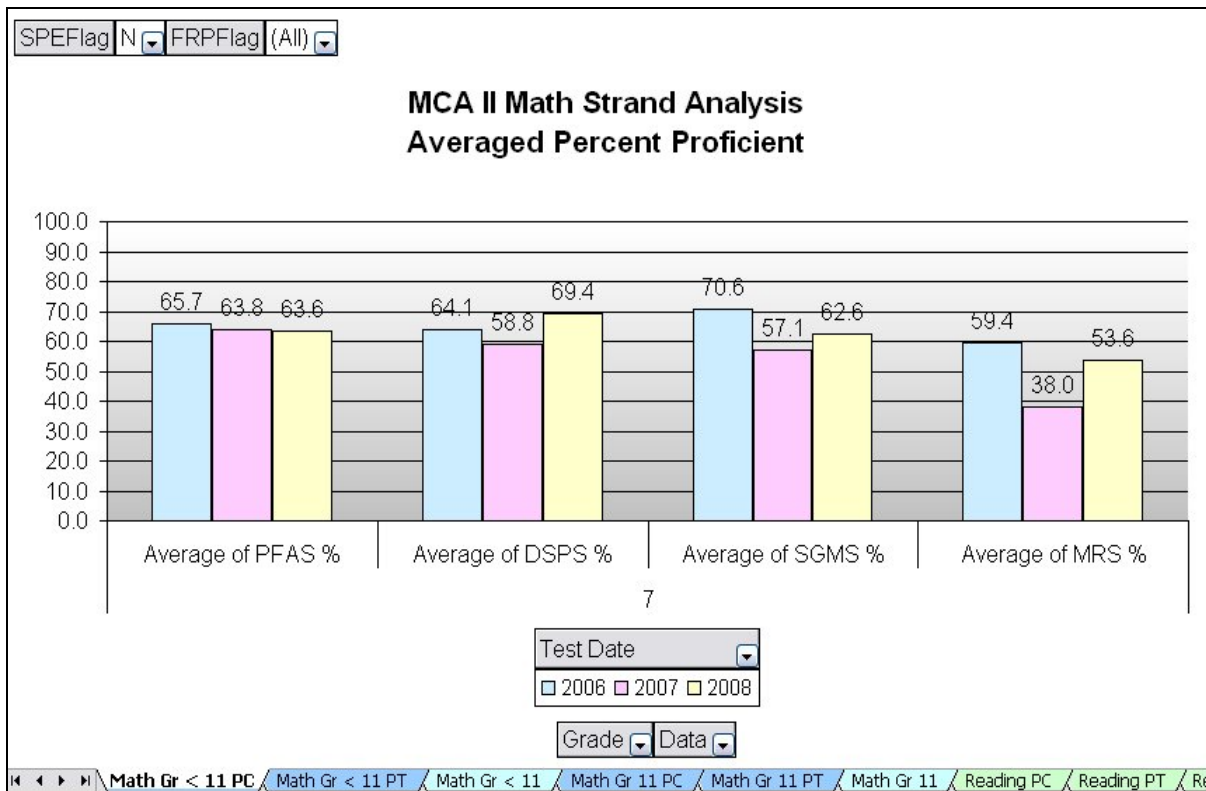


Figure 1 - Excel Strand Analysis Pivot Chart for MCA II Math

Live Online Support for Assessments - Dale Nielsen

All you need is an open mind, a computer with Excel on it and a telephone! If you would like to schedule **BOMGAR** online training for assessments, contact Dale Nielsen at (218) 723-1700 ext 108 or email dnielsen@arcc.org

Look for News, Updates, Downloads and Links related to standardized testing on ARCC's website (<http://www.arcc.org>) under 'Assessments'.



Entering Assessments Data in Infinite Campus - Dale Nielsen

There are better things you can do with your time than to manually enter assessment results. Just a reminder to all that if your district is loading District Student Results [.DSR] files, there is no need to manually enter data by school building. In fact, if data is manually generated before a data load, records will be 'duplicated' and you'll need to manually correct each student's records by removing duplicated data.

There are only a couple of circumstances that come to mind, by which you'd need to manually generate assessment records:

- When students transfer into your district
- When there is an error during a mass load that causes the record(s) to be rejected. Infinite Campus load error reports are used to identify/correct these issues.



If you don't see expected current assessment results for your students in Infinite Campus, please check with the District Assessment Coordinator [DAC], or whoever is in charge of data loads.

Results vs Achievement Levels - Dale Nielsen

We're expected to store and report a large quantity of assessment outcomes spread over many years and many different types of assessments. Even though most of that data is 'Minnesota-centric', it's important to understand that the only result codes generated onsite are for the Basic Skills Tests (BSTs) and the Minnesota GRAD Written assessments. ALL of the rest of the Minnesota assessments contain achievement levels, not 'results'.

Feedback has come in from various staff in more than one district, who are trying to assign for example, 'Passed Individual' [PI] results on assessments that provide no facility to do so. An example of this type of assessment is the new GRAD Reading assessment. But the new record format contains other information about the student; Special Ed Flag, Special Ed Code and Accommodation Code(s). The assessment is automatically scored and achievement levels are determined by MDE, not by 'us'.

We've heard nothing from MDE about being allowed to 'override' any automatically assigned achievement level at this time and advice would caution not to do so. A standardized record format is something we'd all like to see. MDE isn't there yet and with the introduction of the GRAD Reading and Math, containing new achievement level codes as well as both MCA II and GRAD information, it's asking a lot of the stakeholders to try and decipher the outcomes.

I feel that it's prudent to defer to MDE, on how best to cope with the constantly changing 'message' in the outcomes that we're expected to report and explain to the public, but I can help you properly store and analyze the information.

Did You Know That ARCC is an ESA?

Did you know that ARCC is an **ESA**? *"Hey, that's a new one...what the heck is an ESA?"* you may ask? Well, let me tell you.

ESA is the acronym for Infinite Campus **Educational Service Agency**. ARCC periodically meets with similar agencies, consortia, and regional information management centers (RMIC) from across the country to focus on how we can jointly work to support the vision of Infinite Campus.



During these high level meetings we discuss issues and concerns that face *all* Infinite Campus customers. We are presented with new features and generally find out what our peers are doing across the USA.

- Jim Livesay

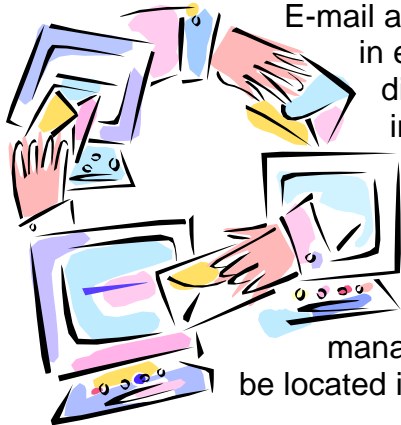
Zip + 4 . . . ~ Kevin Lindquist

Did you know your SMART and Campus databases residing at ARCC contain more than 160,000 postal addresses? That using the 4 digit zip extension provides more precise destination information and may be required for presorted or bulk mailings in the future?

Okay, that last line sounds a bit like an advertisement for the U.S. postal service, but given the quantity of addresses in our systems, we feel we can save you some time by doing an automated update of the +4 zip extensions. While it is not critical to get these updated immediately, we felt it would be best to be ahead of the game. Thus we are putting together a one time process to add missing 4 digit zip extensions, as well as supply you with a list of addresses which may be invalid or improperly formatted. I will be sending more specific information regarding the project and the timeline to the appropriate SMART and Campus contacts. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (218)723-1700 ext 123 or email me at klindquist@arcc.org.



E-Mail Archiving – a Definition



E-mail archiving is an orderly process to saving and protecting the data contained in e-mail messages so it can be accessed at a later date. In the past, school districts and others often relied on end-users to maintain their own individual e-mail archives. The IT department would back up e-mail, but not in a manner that made *all* email searchable, nor were all email and attachments accessible.

With today's compliance legislation and legal discovery rules, it has become necessary for many school district technology departments to manage the entire district's e-mail archiving in bulk so specific messages can be located in an expedient manner.

- *Jim Livesay*

Kris' Korner!

Organizing Tips taken from www.ehow.com

Step 1

Focus on a particular area you want to organize: a drawer, closet, a room -- even a corner of a room. Organization seems daunting if you become overwhelmed by the mess or the thought of dealing with it, so reserve a chunk of time for the task and tell yourself you'll do whatever you can in 10 minutes, 30 minutes, an hour -- whatever you choose. Remember, you're in control here, not the mess! Turn on a kitchen timer if you want to make it official.

Step2

Each space has a purpose, so decide on yours. If it's a hall closet, are you storing linens and medication, or fishing and craft supplies? Is your filing cabinet meant for bills and school papers? If you're working with an entire room, is this a bedroom? An exercise room? A mix of home office and guest room? You need a purpose before you can organize.

Step3

Here's the tough part: With the purpose of your space in mind, weed through every item in the space. That's right -- every item. Put out at least three bins. How you sort items into these bins depends on what you have and how you want to use the space. If you're going through a filing cabinet, for instance, label the bins according to the papers you have: mortgage, auto, school, medical. If you're sorting through a closet, you can divide by pants, shirts, dresses, jeans. With a child's playroom, sort by puzzles and games, videos, dolls, trucks, and so on. Have an "everything" room? Divvy up the bins by larger items, like exercise gear, CDs, DVDs, craft supplies. *Too much junk to be so specific? Divide everything into three chunks: things to keep, things that belong in another place in your house and things to toss or donate.

Step4

In general, if you haven't worn it in two years or used it in three, get rid of it. If something is a family heirloom or has high sentimental value, it should have a place of honor in your home or be kept in a special manner. If you haven't been doing this, make it a point to do so, or think of another way to honor the memory.

Step5

With your space pretty much sorted and empty, here's the fun part: shopping and putting things away! Remember how you want to use the space. If you want to store extra linens and bedding in a hall closet, how about some wicker bins or inexpensive shelf dividers (kind of like plastic bookends) for corralling wayward towels? In a clothes closet, you might need to buy more hangers, put up a shelf -- or get creative. For instance, you can store and sort shoes in their original boxes or ones of similar size; stack 'em with a picture on front of what's inside. Pegs on a cloth message board are an attractive way to store necklaces. In a child's room, expandable mesh hampers (available cheap) can hold dolls, balls and other odd-shaped items.

Step6

Whenever you put something away, take a moment to focus and return it to the new home you've created. If you slack off a little, take time each week to reorganize.

Quote of the Quarter ~

"We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give".

~ Sir Winston Churchill



Soppapias (Cream Cheese Bars)

2-8oz cream cheese, room temperature
2 pkgs crescent rolls
1+1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup butter, melted (1/2 stick)
1 tsp vanilla
1 Tbsp cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350 - Use a 9x13 glass pan, spray the bottom of the pan.

Beat cream cheese with vanilla and 1 cup sugar until fluffy. Unroll & spread 1 pkg crescent rolls to fill bottom of sprayed pan. Spread cream cheese mixture on top of dough. Unroll & spread 2nd pkg crescent rolls over cream cheese mixture. Drizzle butter on top. Mix cinnamon into remaining 1/2 cup sugar & sprinkle over top. Bake 25 to 30 minutes in preheated oven. Refrigerate leftovers (if any!!)



ARCC WILL BE CLOSED



January 1 ~ New Years Day
February 16 ~ President's Day



Have a Safe Holiday!

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Please contact ARCC with any address or name updates